

Southeast Indiana Trials to Freedom Underground Railroad Calendar of Events

“What if All Decatur County Reads...? One County, One Book” **September 15 through September 21**

The Greensburg Public Library is holding their annual event September 15 through September 21. The book chosen for this year's event is **“Follow the Drinking Gourd”** by Jeanette Winter. While classified as children's literature, this book is suitable for adults as the theme of slavery and freedom is one that defies any age barrier. Everyone can read and learn from this book and the accompanying week long programming that is being held at the library.

Freedom is My Home **Saturday, Sept. 15 - 2 pm**

This one woman drama by Charlotte Battin has been accepted by the National Park Service for inclusion in the programs available through the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. This story is told from the point of view of Margaret Ella Scott, a Quaker woman who is an abolitionist and an active participant in the Underground Railroad. The audience will hear a first hand narrative about the way the Railroad works, the secret codes that are used and the reasons why Margaret herself participates. This program is for ages Kindergarten through adult.

“Why Be an Abolitionist?” **Sunday, September 16 - 2:30 pm**

David Crowley will present a program that will offer ideas and discussion on the cultural and religious motives for helping to free the slaves. Open to everyone.

General book discussion of “Follow the Drinking Gourd” **Monday, September 17 - 6:30 pm**

Come and share your thoughts on the book with others in the community. For all ages.

The Patchwork Path **Tuesday, September 18 - 6:30 pm.**

Learn the facts and fictions concerning Freedom Quilts made by slaves as maps to the North. Jane Keith will talk about quilting and quilt patterns. We will be creating a “quilt square” to display at the library. This program is open to all ages and families are encouraged to participate together.

Also:

Decatur County has an important and interesting connection to the Underground Railroad. In 1847 a slave named Caroline and her 4 children escaped from Kentucky, crossed the Ohio River and used the Underground Railroad to get to the Douglas McCoy home in Decatur County. Before Caroline and her family could be guided to the free black settlement east of Clarksburg, Woodson Clark discovered them and sent for the slave owner. This began a series of events that involved Luther Donnell who was later tried and convicted in a Decatur County court of assisting a slave to escape.

Due to a group effort from the Arts and Cultural Council, The Tourism Bureau, the Historical Society and the Decatur County Community Foundation the county will soon be receiving a marker at the courthouse commemorating the Donnell case and Decatur County has been placed on the Southeast Indiana Trails to Freedom Underground Railroad driving tour.

You can learn more about this case and several others as William O. Smith presents:

Slavery in Indiana

Wednesday September 19 - 7 pm

and

Stories of Escape Across Indiana, Including the Luther Donnell Story

Thursday, September 20 - 7 pm

Mr. Smith has done extensive research on the subject and has written a booklet that has been accepted into the Indiana State Library.

Stop by the library to see a display board on loan from the Decatur County Historical Society with pictures of people and places connected to the local Underground Railroad. There are also several other suggested books and videos about slavery and the Freedom Trail available for loan.

These programs are all free of charge, but registration is required. Please call 812-663-2826 for more information and to sign up. Read the book, attend one or all of the programs and learn more about this important part of our history.

Follow the Drinking Gourd to the library and hop aboard the railway to knowledge and understanding.